The official newsletter of the United Fanzine Organization

Tetragrammaton Fragments

#229 July 2013

The UFO Membership

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TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS #229

FIRST PRINTING: July 2013. This is the PDF edition of the issue (which had a print run of 40 copies, printed by Rob Imes, whose contact info is above). PRICE: $1.50 (plus $1.00 for P&H in the USA).

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CHAIRMAN CHATTER

Thanks to **Don Ensign** for drawing the front cover of this issue, which depicts a scene from the Edgar Rice Burroughs story "The Chessmen of Mars." Thanks also to **David Branstetter** for creating the UFO ad on our back cover.

There were **five** UFO memberzines released since last issue: *Ditkomania* #91, *Fantasy Theater* #23, *Hero Central Junior* #2, *Straw Man* #0, and *Tales of Fantasy* #61. This means that every member has fulfilled publication requirements for 2013, except for Sam Gafford (who will be publishing *The Damned Thing* zine next month or so).

Honorary Member Jim Main published ***Western Tales* #1** this summer, which contained the UFO Checklist (and the UFO symbol) on the back inside cover, and was available to members as a free PDF. It thus meets all the requirements of a memberzine and so I am including that issue in the current UFO Checklist.

The **"must publish a zine by"** dates:
BRANSTETTER: June 2014
BULLOCK: June 2014
CARRIER: June 2014
ENSIGN: May 2014
GAFFORD: January 2013 *(overdue)*
IMES: June 2014
JOHNSON: June 2014

Good news! Every member is paid up on their **annual dues** for the rest of 2013. Carrier and Gafford re-upped this month *(thanks!)*. Here are the numbers:

BRANSTETTER: paid until March 2014
BULLOCK: paid until May 2014
CARRIER: paid until July 2014
ENSIGN: paid until January 2014
GAFFORD: paid until July 2014
IMES: paid until February 2014
JOHNSON: paid until March 2014

"Must write" a column for TF #230: *no one.* (Every active member wrote a column this time around!)

I have standardized the deadlines for *T-Frags*, so that the deadline is on the 20th of every other month. The deadline for next issue (#230) is **Sept. 20th**.

As mentioned last issue, the **election for Chairman** occurs in September. Since no other member announced their intention to run, I will be running unopposed for the position. Election results will be announced next issue.

To anyone reading this who **isn't** a member of the UFO (United Fanzine Organization) and would like to join, all of the information you need can be found in the UFO Constitution which is located on the next two pages.

If you'd like to stay in touch via the internet, note that there are two UFO pages on Facebook: the public group page (search for *United Fanzine Organization*), and the secret page limited only to current members (*UFO Members Only*). Also, check out the official UFO website (run by me) at http://unitedfanzineorganization.weebly.com

-- Rob Imes, UFO CHAIRMAN

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The UFO Constitution

Article One: Becoming a Member

To become a member of the **United Fanzine Organization** co-op, one must inform the Chairman of one's **application** and send a copy of his/her comic or zine to all members listed on the UFO roster. The membership will then **vote** on acceptance. (If the applicant's zine or comic is available to view online, the applicant may email the members a link to the pages for evaluation in lieu of mailing a printed copy; however, applicants should send a printed copy to members who are not regularly online or who specifically request the applicant to mail them a printed copy.) If a majority of the membership votes "yes" on the applicant's admission, he/she becomes a member. Applicants who receive a majority of "no" votes may apply again for membership at a later date.

Article Two: Membership Requirements

(a) All members are required to **publish a minimum of 20 pages** of new material (comic or text) per year. Web zines with equivalent material will count toward membership requirements. There is no maximum limit to the number of titles one may publish as memberzines.

(b) Each member is required to **mail a free copy of each memberzine**, as it is published, to all other co-op members. Publishers of webcomics should send hard copy versions of their online comics to the membership (as not all members may have internet access). Digital publishers must send an email to each member notifying them of their webzine. (Since webzines are free to all, those publishing print zines are not required to mail their zines to those publishing only on the web, but are encouraged to do so.)

(c) Each member is required to **submit a column** to at least every other issue of the UFO Newsletter (*Tetragrammaton Fragments*). The purpose of member columns is first to review the memberzines that one has received and second discuss club business (such as voting on amendments and applicants). *T-Frag* contributions are limited to a maximum of 10 pages each issue per member, unless the member receives the Chairman's consent to allow a higher page count for that particular issue of the newsletter.

(d) **Member dues are $20.00 annually**. These dues help to cover co-op promotion, and printing and mailing of the bi-monthly UFO Newsletter. If a member falls behind in his/her annual dues and/or publishing requirements, the member may ask the Chairman for a brief extension. If the member is dropped for failing to meet publishing requirements or newsletter participation, any remaining money in their account will be used toward their subscription to the newsletter.

(e) The UFO is limited to **25 members**. Others applying after the limit is reached will be placed on a waiting list and considered for membership in the order in which they applied. Waitlisters have the option of submitting a column to the UFO newsletter but they are not required to do so. It is at the discretion of each UFO member whether to send their memberzines to those on the waitlist since it is not required. UFO members are allowed to be members of other co-ops while they are in the UFO.

(f) **Honorary Members** are persons who have been voted into that position by a majority vote of the members. They may contribute to the newsletter, but have no voting power, are not required to pay the annual dues, and are not required to meet publication requirements. It is at the discretion of each member whether to send an Honorary Member a copy of their memberzine or not, as it is not required.

Article Three: Memberzine Requirements

(a) Each UFO publication must carry the **UFO symbol** on one of its four covers (exterior or interior front and back), preferably the front exterior cover. Webzines must display the symbol on their front page prominently.

(b) Each UFO memberzine (print or digital) is required to carry the **UFO Checklist**. Members may alter the wording in the Checklist as it appears in their own publications, as long as the changes are accurate and non-detrimental to those listed. (For minis or zines of 16 pages or less, an Abbreviated Checklist may be used, with simply the titles and prices of the books, and the names and addresses of the respective publishers.)

(c) The UFO does not **censor** its material, however responsibility and use of good taste and common sense in publishing are encouraged. The Chairman must publish member columns in the UFO newsletter unedited as long as they are within the page-count limit and not illegal or obscene in content.

Article Four: The UFO Chairman

(a) **Annual election**: A Chairman shall be elected in September, by a majority vote of the members, to a one-year term commencing in November. (Those running for the position of Chairman should start their campaigns no later than the July issue of the newsletter.)

(b) **Responsibilities**: An elected Chairman has the duties of editing and publishing the bi-monthly UFO newsletter, conducting the general co-op business, managing member dues accounts, or delegating these affairs. In consideration of the time and effort expended in the production of the UFO newsletter, a newly elected Chairman will be allowed two years -- dating from the publication of this first NL -- to publish an issue of his/her regular small press book, instead of the one zine a year requirement for the other members.

(c) **Emergency Chairman**: It is important that the UFO Chairman appoint an Emergency Chairman immediately upon assuming office. The Emergency Chairman shall assume the office of UFO Chairman if the elected Chairman resigns the position prior to the next election, or if the elected Chairman fails to publish the newsletter for more than 100 consecutive days.

(d) **Removal**: There is no limit to the amount of terms a Chairman may hold. The Chairman may be removed from office only by a majority vote. A Chairman who decides not to run for another term should make this known to the members prior to the publication of the July newsletter, so that other members may have time to announce their campaigns for the position.

STRANGE FREQUENCIES

Opinions and Editorial by David Branstetter

Tales of Fantasy 59 + 61

I appreciate Larry sending me a copy of issue 59 to Tales of Fantasy along with his newest issue #61. Again I have to state how envious I am of him that he's able to produce this quality of work in such a short time span. I also like getting the complete history of The Hand. I felt with issue 60 I was in the middle of something that I didn't know all the history of. With these two issues it felt great to be introduced to the character in real time.

I like the mystery surrounding The Hand. Where do his powers come from and at what price? The more interesting overtones about the book is this idea, that when secrets are kept too long they may have unintended consequences. I really liked the addiction story line that The Hand is facing. We can infer that when we see Mr. Elias' hand that there's something dangerous about Freddie's secret identity.

Sometimes I do find that Larry goes back to the same well too often. The Hand rescues 3 victims in the same alley. My recommendation is that if you live in Greenville don't go near that alley!

I get the impression when reading this issue that this is what it must be like for someone who feels helpless and wants a way to feel powerful. Freddie doesn't seem emboldened with a sense of purpose. Despite his new powers he's still a timid hero. He does the superhero thing by rescuing helpless victims but still seems guarded the whole time. He's cautious but still feels pleasure from donning the suit. It's a weird dichotomy.

I forgot to mention that I enjoy seeing some of Larry's looser work featured prominently in some of the flashback scenes. All in all an interesting premise. Keep up the good work.

Ditkomania #91

I came into reading comics at a time when Speedball was already an established character. I always thought that he had one of the most distinctive looks of the New Warriors. I had no idea that Speedball was one of the new kids on the block. So I appreciate a full breakdown of Speedball's history and creation.

I suppose in retrospect it should

be obvious that Speedball wasn't created specifically for the New Warriors. His costume design and strange powers reflected a little more imagination than the average run of the mill Marvel hero.

In Rob's article you can clearly see that Ditko was invested in the character and truly hoped it would become the next big thing. It's a shame that he never did quite catch on like Spider-Man.

Sometimes I think creators and writers hedge their bets with the creation of a new series. They want to see if the character will catch on before telling the story they really want to tell. I would hate to invest myself into something that builds and builds but with no pay out. I think if Speedball had continued we may have seen a new character to the Marvel Universe become an essential and nuanced addition. Most of us can not imagine a world where a Speedball movie exists but I say look what happened to Iron Man. You had a b-list character who became the star of the Marvel cinematic universe because you had a great script, great acting, and great effects. It all worked out. Given the right attention Speedball may have had a life like that.

I especially liked the analysis of the Professor Mudl/Kill-Joy towards the end of Rob's second article. That description makes me realize that Ditko has the ability to make people understand a logical fallacy by impossibly switching the roles of characters who didactically preach a philosophy that can hurt others. I think the Mudl/Kill-Joy relationship works well as an analogy of how others have dismissed Ditko's creation of Spider-Man as merely the illustrator. Most people do not follow things out to their logical conclusion and can therefore be swept away by emotion or corporate smear campaigns.

I enjoy Ditkomania because it takes the time to look at things in their proper historical context. Always a great read. Thanks Rob!

Fantasy Theater # 23

Wow. I just finished reading the story "The Godmother Principle" and I got say I really like it. Right up my alley. Kinda goofy but imaginative and it runs at a great pace. Sure some of the drawings aren't that sophisticated but they were able to communicate the story really well.

I was the most impressed with Kevin's scripting skills. I didn't know anything about the characters and I was having fun within a few short pages. I think that element to comics is gone these days. It's great to see someone pull it off without even blinking. I have to credit the script because it delivers a very clear and focused story. The

dialogue clipped along a brisk pace.

With Glorianna: Steel I was a little less smitten with, mainly because I'm not a fan of the barbarian genre (ironic coming from a big Cerebus fan). I kept reading despite my reservations and I found that I still found things to enjoy about the story. By the end I told myself I could happily read another issue. I did like the fact that Grandma was telling the story. It was an interesting framing device. That aspect reminded me of the Princess Bride. Hopefully the book doesn't take itself too seriously and it develops it's own identity. I think that's where I was hesitant about the story. I didn't want to read somebody else's Conan story. I wanted something different. I think Glorianna has the potential to do just that.

Hero Central Junior #2

Just flipping through the book I noticed some positive things right off the bat. Adding color to Jason's work really makes the artwork pop. I thought that adding a solid green background to everything might have been a mistake but it actually adds a nice warmness to the book. As a designer some things bother me like the low resolution of some of the logos and fonts. Jason if you need some help I'm always willing to lend hand.

I can't say much about the story because I don't know what's a stake. Character motivations aren't clear. There's a recap of last issue in the inside front cover but it doesn't really help set the fram for what I'm about to read. I kept asking myself why are these characters battling it out for the first half of the book?

I did like the ending of the story because we got a chance to see the world these characters inhibit. Superheroes seem to be a common everyday thing and that the internet is going crazy over rumors of a possible alien invasion. That gives me a little information about the world but it doesn't really tie into the fight at the beginning. I think the book lacks a central focus point. Even though the X-men is about several different characters, it always had one character that the audience was able to latch on to. I say find one character you like and tell the story from his perspective. 2 minutes after reading the book I can't visualize any particular character. I don't have to tell you that's not a good thing!

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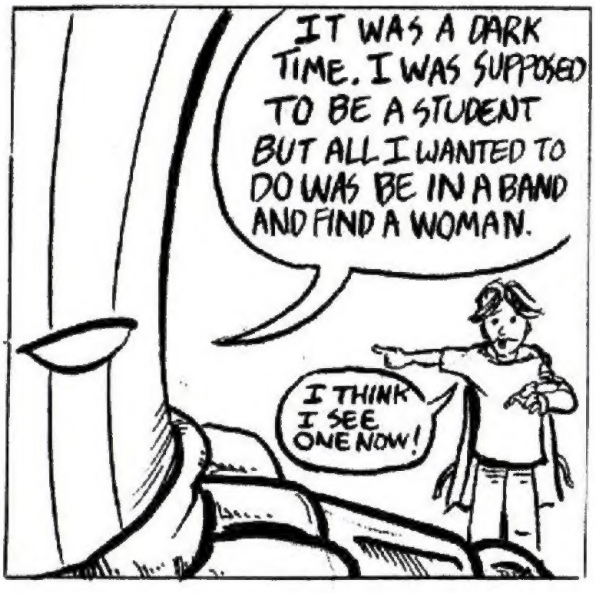
So what am I up to?

So a few years ago I started doing an online version of Straw Man called "Straw Man Strips". I was only 5 strips into a new story line when I was sidetracked and eventually just gave up any idea of doing anything other than the next issue of Straw Man. My wife and I had a little girl and that pretty much delayed the Straw Man #10 by a year. I'm in the process of working on issue 11 but it's been slow moving. I'm trying to tidy up all my loose ends and that's why I chose to put out issue zero before finishing issue 11.

I realized that I needed a way to engage with my fans on a regular basis so I decided to revive the abandoned Straw Man strips. I'd like to have that story line wrapped up before I finish Straw Man issue 12 so I can be officially done with the project. So far I'm 5 strips in and I'm updating the story every Wednesday. I like the idea of having a deadline. So between doing the strips, building websites, and doing graphic design I'm trying to make some progress on issue 11. If I was simply wanting to "get it done" I would have it finished a while back. Instead I want to create something that's truly awe inspiring. Something that pushes my creative limits beyond their breaking point. I think I can always fall back to what comes more naturally (like the strips) but I just want to see how far I can take it. I can expect everyone to wait for me to finish and I understand that I may be loosing fans in the process. Hopefully it'll all be worth it in the end.



"A Quick Review of Reviews."

By Jason Bullock

I finished reading *TFrags* #228 and had a few reply comments about the issue as well as regards to my quick release *HCU Confidential*. Awesome cover art by J. Kevin Carrier of his *Fantasy Theater* characters. I think this was a great issue with articles and opinions from a greater variety of UFO members. After reading David Branstetter's comment about a few of the scenes of my last *HCU Confidential* about the Layout swipes from *X-Force* #4. I wanted to do a sideways quick comic and that issue really spoke to me with the layouts. I guess I relied way too heavily on those pages to direct my art. My apologies as that was not my intention to swipe it from the 1990's. I am going to start reviewing the second half of the story and make sure I avoid that from happening again. I do like to draw from my experiences that includes from previous sources of art as reference. Thanks David for helping me catch that.

I used a similar visual image in *HCU* 8-9 of the Tortelli Mafia Family takeover by Isis' avatar Stella Maris aka Aesys. She was not only guilty of extreme duress in acquiring the resources from her target to use in the funding of the Hero Central organization. Before acquiring her powers as Aesys from the awakened Isis, Stella Maris was the assistant district attorney involved with the prosecution of mobster Tony Tortelli. We saw her abuse of her power, the choice over life and death of the puppy as well as Tony Tortelli, as most passionate zealots are often seen on the fine line between being considered good or evil. As Don Ensign remarked about not being able to tell who the good guys are, with all the HCU awakened Pantheon characters each decided to achieve their common goal with their own methodology. Isis chose to ally an avatar of her own power with Herakles to help gather modern heroes utilizing them as a modern response team to fight the efforts of evil. She called it Hero Central. This is what the modern age heroes are doing concert with the ancient heroes. Sinbad, Merlyn, and Solomon are seeking out the source of evil that woke them up on their own. Raiden is the only other awakened Pantheon member to recruit young heroes to become a force for good and to protect innocents. Don was right on with alliance aspects of heroes in parallel from ancient alliance to modern leagues. Hey Don, I am glad that you liked the design for Shutterbug. Hopefully you'll be seeing more of Michael Faraday's comrade in arms from Parallel-Earth. You are gonna be surprised when he reveals his true powers in future sequences when we all learn who actually caused the explosion on the space cruiser that Michael and Flora were vacationing on. It's not gonna be pretty for those following the series.

REVIEWS:

No. 61 of Tales of Fantasy by Larry Johnson.

What can I say? I got exactly what I asked for when I saw THE HAND for the first time. Thank you Larry. I loved the Art Gallery scene as the Brookston focal point of the communities' experiences with The Hand. The camera phone sequence with Angela was great showing the viewer how captivating modern technology has surpassed the media mechanism as it has been placed into the hands of the every man if you pardon the pun. With the looming Mr. Morphote on Freddy's trail, we begin to worry if such dire consequences will befall him as did its former user Dexter Elias. Excellent work in *TOF* # 61. Everyone should pick up a copy.

JKC Fantasy Theater # 23 by J. Kevin Carrier.

More Glorianna!!! Sweet. Okay enough fanboy euphemism ...wait one more...Snap! Okay that's all I promise. Well composed in its entirety, this issue bundles the two primary stories of Lady Spectra & Lizard Man with Glorianna completing the release's pages. Steven Myers' minimalist approach to the art in the story "The Godmother Principle" is easily contrasted with line widths and inking techniques. Its apparent that Steve enjoys relying on frontal imagery when approaching panel work. "Steel" featuring Glorianna by J.Kevin Carrier develops further for the readers as we see that Glorianna has to tackle a threat to life that even her hacking sword skills can't overcome. Awesome development Kevin in the way the threats to the world of Glorianna continue onwards even if she struggles to catch up with it. Keep up the great work!

Ditkomania # 91 by Rob Imes.

Speedball is one of my favorite Ditko characters. I was impressed with the color cover for this issue. I am glad that Rob received financial assistance from Kickstarter for this issue's project. It was money well spent for the extra page count and color cover. I enjoyed the *Amazing Spiderman Annual* #22 with Speedball and Daredevil on the cover. Ditko was definitely spreading the Speedball bug around appearances in *Marvel Age*, *Amazing Spiderman*, *Marvel Comics Presents*, and finally *Speedball* #1. With only 10 issues to print then cancellation, Speedball would prove a more integral part of the Marvel Universe as a member of The New Warriors and ultimately the *Avengers Initiative* series. What a profound change for a character whose name was joked to be combined of two street drugs in the 1980s (Heroin and Cocaine). The Illustrations in this issue are phenomenal as well. I really enjoyed this issue of *Ditkomania* more than most others that have come from the creative work of Rob Imes. Thanks Rob!

Strawman #0 by David Branstetter.

Here the readers are given insight into the mind of StrawMan, his perceptions, his universe. A collection of existing StrawMan stories, David presents them to us in such a way that we are able to understand his jaunt into the ridiculous as the parallels of our own world bleed through. Learning that StrawMan believes in his facade so much that we all see what he sees as his visage is insightful into his own demands to remain anonymous. David has developed a unique art style that he admits freely that he has become comfortable with . Whether tracking down the serendipity with Bad Penny or monitoring the mesmerisms of the Psychadelic Tangerine, David's unique characters pull us through their world events one page at a time. I have to admit the Dark Spork Rising story was a little too close to home for what many of us would like to do in the theater to those look rude to keep a modicum of self respect with their gums flapping rederick of opinions destroying any semblance of a good time to be had by anyone paying those $10 prices. Thank you David for showing exactly what many of us would like to do in that circumstance. You can get many of the StrawMan releases and products from David Stansetter at Dim Light Graphics. Way to go David! I loved the series collector cards set from StrawMan Universe. You must tell me where and how you got those done!

Thanks everyone for all your great releases. Okay I'm back to the drawing table for my next book and radio dramas.

The Ensign Report #9 (July 2013) UFO Edition

Printed as a part of Tetragrammaton Fragments #229. Comments and opinions by Don Ensign. © 2013 Don Ensign

Tales of Fantasy #61 (Larry Johnson-2013)

Whenever I receive a UFO zine (or even mainstream comic) I tend to flip through them looking at the art before I actually starting reading the pub. This gives me a visual survey of the graphic "landscape". What I noted about this issue was the prominence of heads. Let's see how Larry was going to deal with all these talking heads, especially in the first story where there was a crowd of people congregated in an art exhibit? Also I noted in this story (and in previous Johnson tales) that the people inhabiting his yarns are normal, ordinary individuals hardly refugees from *GQ* or *Vogue*. These are people we rub shoulders with every day. I like that as it allows a degree of realistic to enter a highly fanciful context. The denizens of Brookston are a fairly ordinary looking lot. Johnson's weaves his character's dialog skillfully during the claustrophobic crowd scene and there is never any question to who said what and it continues through both chapters doing its narrative function. Yes, the talking heads work in moving the story forward and allowing us to gain the necessary information. Once again Johnson delivers fine work in both story and art. Dan Burke went on a lengthy online denunciation of the worn plot device of somehow super heroes always arrive at the right place at the right time to stop a crime (or they always just "stumble" on a crime in progress). I'd agree with Dan that this has been done to death. Coincidence is used far too often to justify such circumstances. Having read hundreds of Golden Age stories this plot device probably originated during that time because the writers and editors were too lazy to consider plausible ways that don't involve coincidence to link crime and hero. It is possible that the reader demand for such material was so great that the publishers needed to pump this material out in such as steady stream niceties like plausibility got lost in the shuffle. Also the readers of that time were perhaps less sophisticated in their critical approach to the super hero comics they read. However Johnson does not leave the Hand's rescues to chance or coincidence. In the Hand stories so far the Grove device compels our reluctant hero (Freddy Brown) into the action. The Glove communicates with Freddy by a tangible burning hand/palm sensation. The Grove device seems to act as a monitor/scanner that can detect bad things happening within a certain geographical range. It is even possible the Glove has a limited ability to see the future giving its human host time to respond to the summons, attach the Glove and fly to the scene of the crime in progress. The Glove gives our hero the power of flight and the ability to hone in on the exact location. While the Glove is very directive of its human host it does allow the host free will in order to give the bad guys a chance to give up before they are blasted by the repellent ray. The human wearer of the Glove still is in control of using its devastating force. So Johnson has given a plausible reason for The Hand showing

up when he is needed-without relying on coincidence. A second issue also presents itself. The location of the muggings, thefts and assaults are at the same location. It is an alleyway with a view of the BSI building on the left skyline and to the upper right on the alley wall is a poster of Dr. Morphote. New Agers or paranormal investigators would term this a "psychic hotspot" where bad things often happen (think haunted houses for one thing). On the first point I've related a quasi-scientific explanation, however both points could be in the mystical/spiritual even magical realm though I think that is a less satisfying explanation.

Fantasy Theater #23 (J. Kevin Carrier, 2013). As mentioned in the previous review I tend to flip through a newly acquired zine or comic to do a brief visual survey. My first impression was the artwork seemed to lack something especially in "The Godmother Principle." This story was basically the meeting of two super heroes (Lady Spectra & Lizard Man) punching out a gang generic bad guys. Steven Myers did a rushed-looking Kirbyeque art job. Courier does light but deftly crafted dialogue (also in the Glorianna yarn) which helps this story do what it needs to be-entertaining- very light entertainment by entertaining none the less. The second Glorianna "Steel" story does allow us to get some insight into the title character. My initial impression of Glorianna was that she was basically a dark-haired Red Sonja. However it seems as if she is a much more normal and sympathetic character with her adventures being revealed as memories of a rather contented grandmother. My suggestion on how to go to the next level on the artwork is to introduced grey shading. For example, p. 33 showing Glorianna on horseback coming out of a forest could have been strengthen by laying in grey tones in the background which would have popped out the advancing equestrian image. Grey tones would have helped Myers' story even more. Investing in Photo Shop Elements or Manga Studio 5 would be a great investment. Nice overall package.

Lady Spiritfist (Darrell Goza, 2013 http://ladyspiritfist.smackjeeves.com/webcomic). Over the course of my time in UFO I've reviewed works by recently departed members. Darrell Goza was a member when I first joined though he soon left as he was becoming more interested in web comics. He also had the distinction of not wanting to reviews the zines of other UFO members--which is really the heart of being in UFO. He has since gathered together a group of other cartoonists (doing their own projects) and has established a internet presence at Smackjeeves.com, a site dedicated to frequent updates (weekly, etc) of web comic strips. Goza's comic strip is called *Lady Spiritfist*. It tells the story of a young girl (Indiria Thorakas Denar) born and reared in the small kingdom of Nada Idone in the Lowell Thomas Mountain range in Antarctica. The story follows the life of Indiria growing up in a male dominated society based on martial arts and Eastern mysticism. She is discriminated against because of her gender and because of her father's disappointment that she wasn't a boy is placed in a very rigor martial arts training regiment in order to prove herself. She applies herself and out

performs her male counterparts but still does not find acceptance. The strips latest offering has her on a series of challenges that she hopes will ultimately gain her father's respect which she craves and deserves.

Goza's art is a blend of Neal Adams, John Byrne, Dick Giordano, Al Williamson, and I'm sure many others. Some of his art is stunning and very accomplished (see Feb 15, May 13 strips). Since Goza has had professional gigs earlier in his career this is to be expected. Perhaps the only annoying thing about the *Lady Spiritfist* art is that so many of the strips are not inked. However Goza does very tight pencils. When I first started reading the strip I thought that it was approaching a feminist comic screed on discrimination against women. However, as I thought more about it-- given the context of being in an Far East (Antarctica-Southern?) where there is very real discrimination against women I was able to accept the concept as one that worked with the perimeters that Goza set up. The latest strip is May 13, 2013 so I hope Goza has not abandoned this project.

RIP: Carmine Infantino:

One of the legends of the Silver Age of Comics left us on April 4. There were three great comic stylists at DC during the 1950s and 1960s, Alex Toth, Joe Kubert and Infantino. I first came across Infantino's work in *Flash* #127 (March 1962) and *Mystery In Space* #75 (May 1962). Infantino started in the 1940s working on the Flash, Hillman's Airboy and many other features. During this period he was essentially a Milton Caniff imitator. Sometime in the 1950s he went back to art school and was challenged to think design in drawing his comics. From that point like Alex Toth, design and composition would be central to his comic book art. He was selected to revive the Flash in 1956. He draw the Flash as the character had never been drawn before. Long horizonal and vertical panels with multi-image running sequences brought the Flash to life. Negative space was used as a design element and even the figures took on a angularity that was rarely seen before in comics. Infantino bent perceptive to suit his purposes and made it work. By the time he left the Flash strip in 1967 he had made such an artistic stamp on the

...TO THE MOMENT WHEN THE GREEN-GARBED CRUSADER WAS DESCRIBING HIS PLAN TO THE FLASH...
...AND EARLIER WHEN WE WERE FACING THE MYRMITONS, MY RING REVEALED THE PRESENCE OF AN INVISIBLE FORCE-FIELD AROUND THEIR HEADQUARTERS! AT THE VERY LEAST IT WOULD SLOW US DOWN IF WE ATTACKED DIRECTLY! SO--

From Flash #131, 1962, Art by Carmine Infantino & Joe Giella. © 1962 DC Comics

feature that very competent artists like Ross Andru (who took over the strip) were intimidated thinking they couldn't match Infantino's feel for the strip. Adam Strange was Infantino's other signature strip of the early 1960s He was able to produce an alien planet and architecture (he felt he was a frustrated architect) that was like nothing being done at the time. When inked by Murphy Anderson this material was absolutely terrific. Infantino with editor Julius Schwartz in 1964 were called on to rescue Batman from possible cancellation, and rehabilitated the strip giving it a new life and plausibility that it hadn't had in years and the readership responded. In 1967 Infantino was given the position of editorial director to help DC compete with a burgeoning Marvel bringing his design skills to many innovative DC covers of the period. He later became DC's Publisher a role he'd have until 1975. Then he left the position and started working for his old rival Stan Lee at Marvel doing such strips as *Star Wars* (apparently at George Lucas' request), *Spider-Woman* and many more. It was his second career as a cartoonist and he did work for Warren, Red Circle (the excellent Comet), and by the early 1980s he was back doing the Flash. I personally felt that a lot of this later material approached hackwork--Infantino was no longer experimenting as in the 1960s. In the late 1980s and early 1990s he did several stints on the Batman newspaper comic strip. After that he basically retired. Many comic book artists have the term legend attached to their name--but Carmine Infantino was truly that. Infantino's favorite strip--Detective Chimp-- done in the 1950s.

BioSpeak 9

Our hometown newspaper was (it is still being published) the *Bellingham Herald*. The *Herald* was somewhat controversial as it seemed as if got some things wrong --at least when its editorial slant didn't always line out with your own views.
However one area that it did a very commendable job was the comic strips that it carried both daily and Sunday. It carried both daily and Sunday *Steve Canyon* by Milton Caniif, *Johnny Hazard* by Frank Robbins, *Snuffy Smith* by Fred Laswell, *Blondie* by Chic Young, *Mandrake* the Magician (daily only) by Lee Falk and Phil Davis, *Prince Valiant* by Harold Foster (Sunday), *Flash Gordon* by Mac Raboy (Sunday), *Rex Morgan, MD* by Nicholas P. Dallis and Marvin Bradley (which I probably never read). In later years the daily *Rocky and Bullwinkle* by Al Kilgore, *James Bond* by John McLusky, *Archie* by Bob Montana (also Sunday) and *Jeff Cobb* by Pete Hoffman joined the ranks. In the 1950s the Sunday strips were printed in black and one other color--red. These were known around our house as the "Red Funnies". *The Herald* later upgraded their presses making the Sunday comics in glorious "Four Color" but they were still the "Red Funnies". As a 1950s kid I remember enjoying *Snuffy Smith*, *Blondie* and *Mandrake*. I became a comic strip collector in the 1960s clipping *Bullwinkle, Flash Gordon. Prince Valiant, James Bond*, and *Jeff Cobb. Steve Canyon* and *Johnny Hazard* were a little too sophisticated for my tastes. There are faint but good memories of Dad reading the funnies to us kids.
On my vacation trips to Colorado I came across the excellent *Cisco Kid* newspaper scripted by Rod Reed (former Captain Marvel editor and writer) and marvelously illustrated by Jose Luis Salias. This was also a rare treat.

Tales of the UFO

Larry Johnson
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HERO CENTRAL JUNIOR #2: There's lot of exciting well staged super hero action in this tight little yarn. Jason uses Photoshop effects to his advantage; but not as a crutch. It is a judicious embellishment to the art. The color scheme throughout has some thought to it as well; even reliance on grayed down backgrounds allow the more richly colored characters to stand out. There's an imaginative use of sound effects – outline lettering making them appear more ethereal yet powerful nonetheless. Then again Jason has made some wise choices in delineating each sound effect in a unique manner. This is something I would call everyone's attention to. "Vrooommm" which reminds one of a revving engine is evoked by varying sizes of letters in the same word, while "Crash" when a character flies through a window is arranged as a flowering, bursting word. "Boom! Boom! Boom!" is perfectly subdued to denote the explosion of little gas bombs. Our computer age allows a wide selection of these faces, but it's important to give some thought to their use in graphic story telling.

I like the arrangement of the panels. There's a variance in panel borders which is effective in pointing out dramatic moments, and the green behind everything is very nice too. The action is easy to follow in this story. I never felt lost. As a criticism I found no reference to any of the characters' names. This team is fighting together and I know this is a side episode in the larger saga Jason is pursuing in his other publication. I know they were introduced last issue, but I need a reminder. That's an excellent looking cover. The printing on this color publication is top notch although the pixilated UFO logo on the cover is illegible.

FANTASY THEATER #23: Kevin presents two different tales in this extra thick issue. Starting with a crossover adventure starring Lady Spectra and Lizard Man. Steven Myles stages his action well and there's no confusion in this superhero tale. At first I wondered about the heavy line inking but then I was reminded a bit of Frank Robbins and felt it leant a certain gutsy feel to the artwork, appropriate for the violent action. I could not help but be reminded of the 60s and 70s DC universe with the characters Poison Ivory (Batman's Poison Ivy) and The God Mother (New God's Granny Goodness); and that's perfectly fine with me. You gotta think, the essence of a tough old broad goes all the way back to Ma Barker and considering the huge gun the God Mother wields in a dynamic shot on page 11, that's a great tradition to draw from. Page 13 – worthy of a "Kirby-esque" full page!

The Glorianna story was revealing in that it made me rethink her world, meaning the time frame. I had assumed this was set in an era on a parallel to Conan the Barbarian but now I see it as a future post apocalyptic Mad Max type of world, or post that era, with souped up Volkswagens and motorcycles running about.

This is the story of Glorianna's daughter Hope, quite a surprise but then it fills out her back story so much more. The relationships are intricate and the "frame" at the end of her descendant telling the story to her granddaughters was a perfect touch. Here we have another example of a collaboration. This tale was inspired by reader Perry Lake (and by the way Perry came up with a new Madame Boogala tale for Tales of Fantasy #62). Kevin's inking looks more and more like woodcuts these days with the wedge-like bold lines. This harkens back to the process used in magazine and newspaper illustration in the 19th century. There are some very handsome pages where this effect is used to best advantage. I like the full page illo on page 33, for example, partly because I'm a landscape artist and the design of the trees and road is evocative of a realistic scene, and you get the feel of Glorianna riding her horse in a determined fashion through this

scene as well. Speaking of horses I give Kevin credit for attempting to draw these complicated animals! For the most part he's successful in capturing their combined grace and power. Believe me, I have been practicing and practicing drawing these difficult animals for a western story and I will say getting their legs right is a challenge. I even have some little plastic dollar store horses to draw from. The best advice I can think of is to rid yourself of anthropomorphic thinking when you are drawing them walking.

What a responsive letters column! And this issue printed by Kablam has perfect production values, good paper and great color for both the front and back covers!

DITKOMANIA #91: This latest issue sports a beautiful full color cover, perhaps the nicest cover seen on any previous issue; all those bouncing heroes are presented in fine form by Javier Hernandez! And Tod Ahern's back cover is equally spectacular with excellent color! Already just looking at the covers you know you are about to experience a high quality publication. The Speedball theme issue provides an insightful overview of this later Marvel character. I bought a few issues at the time and I remember thinking this was a lighter take on the early Peter Parker situation. And I recall thinking the inking could have been better on some issues too. But that may be because Ditko – at this stage in his career – was penciling loosely (not tight like Kirby). I'd forgotten about the cat! David Brandstetter's illustration of Speedball finally catching that elusive fellow was a nod to that element.

Rob Imes gives us an analytical/chronological take on Speedball while Richard Caldwell delves further into the overall scheme of this character in the Marvel issues. I found both these articles presented in a scholarly fashion. "Ditko's Bouncing Heroes" by Rob Imes brings our attention to Mr. Quiver – a fellow I'm quite fond of and rightly points out that not all of Ditko's stories contain a message. Tom Ahern's and Jim McPerhson's illustrations are a perfect complement to this article as well, and as I read this I found myself wondering about the possible influence of Bouncing Boy from the Legion of Superheroes on these characters.

What a lengthy insightful letters column! Rob has allowed the opinionated and storied Ron Frantz to reply to all the comments regarding last issue and righty so because 98% of it was taken up by his memoir. What a historian! There is rambling but, yes, that's exactly the appeal of fanzines! There's room and freedom to indulge opinions and experience relevant to comics history. I read with interest Ron's opinion on Ayn Rand's Objectivism and teenagers. In my comic book class I teach we had a discussion about Ms. Rand and my teenage students who were familiar with her works summed up her philosophy with one word: "selfish." So, there is a varied opinion among young people after all!

Color! More pages! And I certainly enjoyed looking at the PDF version as well since all comics pages reproductions were in color as well. Well maybe Rob can do another Kickstarter campaign for more money next time to print a full color book! One can dream! Onward to issue #100! It seems there's never a dearth of material to examine about the works of Steve Ditko in each issue of Ditkomania!

STRAWMAN ZERO: What a cover! I really like the negative red/black imagery behind the main character. Every story in this book though short serves as a kind of punctuation point in David Brandstetter's vision here. Starting with "Bad Penny" we have this great nine panel page: "There's something familiar about you," where he envisions each personification in what setting he had met up with this woman before. Jubilee, Quick Mart, Pirates of Penzance? Gambling and it's done! Bad Penny is a great name. "The Last Laugh" is a great take on the Joker as "The Heckler!" There's a very good build up in the action in this understandably abbreviated tale. Page three contains full width (wide screen) panels with two very effective close ups at the top – medium shot in panel three and a return to the close up at the bottom – a very expressive face! Pow! "SHUT UP!" on the next page. Here we have a good

layout of this action sequence. Panel Three as the Heckler is tossed upside down with his hand passing over the thickened border panel makes the composition on the whole page. "Scene of the Crime" starts off with a very clever take on the comics code authority seal and page two shows a great experimentation by the use of four vertical panels, and the dynamic entrance of the Psychedelic Tangerine on page three is well realized too. Is that a Spirograph? Breaking the traditional panel borders on page four adds to the hypnotic effect of this character and then the last page is solemn, the lighting on Lt. Rice's face denotes almost a "film noir" look appropriate to the scene.

"An Inside Job" didn't particularly move me as much as the previous stories but "A Moment of Truth" was, on the other hand, both powerful and weird! So, this is how Straw Man came to be, and why his coat and mittens are so important! I like all of the outline and back lit silhouette work on the first page. But the two pages of his anguish – black background explosive panel layout and variant lettering! Sound effects really make this story! I am glad to see a comics artist breaking out of the traditional panel layout in telling a story and this experiment is very successful. It seems in each story David knows where to choose the precise ending point – even though sometimes that is rather inconclusive. But that's OK, because it shows some thought and care put into his project and that's important. Both production values and printing was excellent overall!

STRAWMAN #9: The editorial about self published comics really hits the nail on the head. It's independence, and David expresses this need for artistic expression as well. The story "Fame and Fortune" is witty, tells a strange – but maybe more real than we'd like to admit – situation in the world of advertising! The Extreme Protector indeed! He's a disgruntled commercial "super hero" who takes his role a little too seriously. There's some dialogue exchanges between this nut and Strawman and these are augmented by the well-staged fight scene. There's some real "Spiderman" poses by the Protector and the double page spread where he leaps over the fence is just fantastic. I was very interested in the faces in the crowd, melding to silhouettes in the background. There's some nice placement of the people in clumped groups in this scene on either side of the main figure and the man below on the right, his head between the Protector's arm and leg, with his own arm outstretched balances this composition. I am reminded of historical tableau paintings composed with these components. The layout throughout the battle scene made for a smooth sequence. It's done in classic comic book fashion and I like the use of heavy black borders throughout.

"Death & Rock n' Roll" was a touching slice of life story that chronicled a confluence of events in a very personal way. It was well done.

David also sent me "Strawman Universe Cards" which really shed light on his characters, providing brief biographies of each one. This is a well done product.

MOTHMAN 'TOONS: Here's a cute collection by Jay Gibeaut and Larry Blake! People from Point Pleasant, Virginia are familiar with this creepy character, a local legend. Mothman is a scary looking guy with batwings and there's a statue in the local mall where people often have photos taken of themselves in his company. Larry has illustrated a lot of Jay's gags here including Mothman as a Mailman, so frightening that dogs hide behind trees, him accompanying a pal to a bar to serve as his "wing man", pizza delivery man, and my personal favorite – showing up to vote: "He wants to explain left wing and right wing." You have to see it to believe it! Mothman was one of the stars in Jay and Larry's first issue of Five Star Comics, their recreation of Golden Age heroes. There's no price but it's professionally printed and you can find out more information from Jay at: jlgibeaut@icloud.com.

THE MYSTERY & ADVENTURE SERIES REVIEW #47: Fred Woodworth's publication continues with the most wide ranging and

thought provoking writing I've seen in a long time. There's an article on the Whitman Western TV adaptation books (which are mediocre at best), and in-depth description of how typesetting equipment works – justifying lines – and this is nostalgic for me because it reminds me of my first job at my hometown newspaper! There's a writer's profile, lengthy and engaging letters column, and even the story of how he nursed his cat with kidney failure back to some semblance of health by the use of coffee! This fanzine is proof of an individual continuing on with his own pursuits unfettered by commercial concerns. Great stuff! You can get a copy for sending Fred a contribution. I'd suggest $3.00. Send to: Fred Woodworth, P.O. Box 3012, Tuscon, AR 85702.

WESTERN TALES #1: Jim Main's new book touts three distinctive tales (or I should say two and a preview) of the old west – both fanciful and authentic. Starting with Sadie Six Shot by Rock Baker and Jeff Austin we get Western Cheesecake. Rock is certainly the master of "good girl art" and the design and layout of each page is a delight. The use of white against a black background gives this strip an almost Eisner-like feel (in an obtuse way). I really enjoyed the unique presentation of the "word balloons" the flowing stems to blocks of type is an interesting variation on the usual handling of balloons. On page 6, panel 1 the dialogue exchange should have been reversed by the way. Here we have a story verging on fantasy. The lawman discovers his wife is the bank robber and then he comes up with a scheme to allow her to pursue her interest in a way to give the banks "publicity!" Oh yeah, I'd put my money in such an institution! Nonetheless it was a cute and nicely illustrated vignette.

John Lambert displays his unique style in the preview pages of "Under Western Skies." His art has an interesting structure to it; the third piece – the gunfight – has almost a baroque look to the composition.

The gem of the book, however, is the team up between writer Roger Keel and illustrator Tony Lorenz – "Reputation!" Here they have taken a well-worn theme and handled it with competence and skill. Cain Hawkins comes to town, apparent gun slinger and he's friends with the sheriff. They have a history together. The action on page 4 is handled beautifully. A long panel at the top depicts the two rivals squaring off with each other, then panel two is a tall vertical – BANG! And four panels stacked horizontally atop each other with swiftly paced easy to follow action! The sheriff is immobilized for a while and Cain Hawkins is deputized and from there the tension builds! This was an enjoyable yarn from start to finish and Tony Lorenz is to be commended for his research on the costuming and the look of the buildings, both inside and out – the saloon, the jailhouse, the rutted streets (great touch!) and the boardwalk sidewalks (on pages 6 and 7) typical of western towns from this era.

ODDS AND ENDS: I want to talk about word balloons. It seems more and more, every self published comic book I read has the same kind of word balloon in it – an oval shape generated by a computer. Hey, I certainly have been grateful for Comics Sans face and have been using it in Tales of Fantasy for the past 45 issues. But at the same time I still have been drawing my own balloons. In looking over a random selection of the commercial comics I've enjoyed from my youth – Blondie, Hot Stuff, Ditko's Spiderman, Magnus Robot Fighter, the Charlton Ghost comics featuring stories by Pat Boyette and Tom Sutton – in each case you have distinctive word balloons that go with each artists' particular style.

The problem with these computer generated ovals is that all the type is always centered, and you never break the balloon's border line with any object, like someone's hand, nor would you see for example a three quarters profile of someone speaking and a word balloon BEHIND one side of her face. And you don't ever see the balloon breaking into the panel borders either. And you never see a balloon abutting the left hand border with the type flush left.

In my comic book class one of the important aspects I teach is proper structure and

placement of the balloons. There's a rule that there should be at least one letter's space between the body copy and the balloon line so you can easily read the dialogue. There are times I see in these "computer ovals" that the type is crammed in too tight in one panel and then there's an excess of white space in the next one. I know back in the old days Gold Key went through a period of doing "square" word balloons as a distinctive look which is really weird. This technique might work pretty good for a science fiction story. And sometimes Classics Illustrated had rectangular balloons with curved corners as well.

I'm pointing this out because seeing all these same ovals (which I've been told saves a lot of time) is getting to be very boring, and I would like to see comics artists thinking about producing a more individual statement and that singular look does not come from the drawing style and layout alone.

Thank you Rob Imes for putting the UFO Newsletter up on line as a PDF on the UFO website. That's an ambitious project to get out of print fanzines up as on-line PDFs. Sometime in the future I hope to scan in old issue of The Comet and make them available at PDFs.

I appreciate all the efforts Rob has made as chairman to bring new blood into this group.

I've been thinking of the application process. A potential member should send a sample of his publication to each member so he can vote on admission. Gene Kehoe, publisher of It's A Fanzine, has expressed interest in joining. I have some issues of his book and they are certainly of the caliber we are looking for. He's established with a long line of issues behind him and having another real "fanzine" in the United Fanzine Organization would be a great asset. I would vote for Gene right now. And I imagine that most members are familiar with IAF, even owning some copies already. So I'm not so much saying let's do a constitutional amendment here, but I'd say when someone is an unknown or new to publishing then he should send a copy of his book to each member. In the case of a well-known applicant this wouldn't have to be so "etched in stone."

The next issue of Tales of Fantasy is an all text issue – fiction! And it should be out this summer. I've hit a little snag in production right now. My old Dell 4100 computer (12 years old) has bit the dust. I put together the last 45 issues of Tales of Fantasy on it. The WORD 2000 program has a big selection of typefaces, much more so than the current version. So currently my local "Computer Clinic" is busy transferring what files it can to a compatible computer that can run these programs so I can be in business again.

My own news: This fall marks Zooy's 50th anniversary and I'll be commemorating that event with a special issue of Tales of Fantasy devoted to my favorite little character of my youth. I've already penciled a new 21 page story and I'll be reprinting a Zooy tale I did at age 10 (which appeared in #2 of the homemade TOF), plus some other surprises. I can't let this event go by unnoticed!

Just finished writing The Hand Chapter 5 and I hope that all of you have received the new issue chronicling the adventures of this strange hero! I plan to have a full story arc around 8 to 10 chapters.

Other stuff: The Best of Tales of Fantasy is now available as a Print-On-Demand book on Amazon.com. It's 200 pages of material and is priced at under $10.00. It came out quite handsome and I wouldn't have been able to do this without the help of Dan Burke.

In the meantime I created a free PDF of Tales of Fantasy #53 on my website. It contains a story in the Best of TOF volume. So, I'm attempting to deal with the best of all possible worlds here in self publishing. Yes, I'm still going to the photocopy shop with flats of TOF. And my feeling about doing one on KaBlam is this – funny as it may sound – they don't offer the specific digest size dimensions I have done for the past 61 issues (8 ½ x 5 ½) so, call me picky, there's a kind of consistency you have if you have all the issues of my book.

Someday! Someday! Hey, I predicted "optical glasses" in a science fiction story some years ago where people would have text and movies right on their lenses! On that futuristic note, keep on publishing and long live the UFO!

"A good novel tells us the truth about its hero; but a bad novel tells us the truth about its author."

G.K. Chesterton

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a ufo column by j. kevin carrier

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about last issue:

In case anyone was wondering, that cover drawing was originally intended to be the cover of **Fantasy Theater** #19. But the contents of that issue got shuffled around at the last minute, so the cover didn't fit any more. So it was just sitting there on my hard drive, forlorn and forgotten, until Rob put out a call for **T-Frags** covers. It's actually one of my favorite cover designs, so I'm glad it finally got to see the light of day.

I see the Charimanship election is coming up. I doubt there will be any competition. Rob's been doing an outstanding job running the club, and as far as I'm concerned, the job is his for as long as he wants it.

Don Ensign: I thought your "Fifth Page" comments on mortality and legacy were really interesting. I have to admit, I don't often think in those terms. Even though I've worked in advertising (or perhaps *because* I've worked in advertising) doing a big promotional push for my work always feels vaguely sleazy, so I don't do it as much as I could or should. I'm comfortable with the fact that my audience will probably always be small, and mostly consist of other creators who are likewise laboring in obscurity. Long before I ever found out about fanzines or minicomics, I drew comics for my own amusement. The act of creating is enjoyable to me; actually reaching an audience is a bonus.

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reviews:

DITKOMANIA #91
Rob Imes

Speedball is not a character I ever paid much attention to, but I still enjoyed this very thorough examination of his origins and development. I can see parallels here with Jack Kirby's return to Marvel in the 1970s: In both cases, they were creating work that was thematically and stylistically aloof from the prevailing "Marvel Universe", and thus failed to gain any traction with the fans. Speedball is a great visual design, though (we expect no less from Ditko!), and I got a kick out of seeing the various fan art interpretations. Javier Hernandez's exuberant cover is especially fun, and looks great in color.

Rob's overview of "Ditko's Bouncing Heroes" unearthed a few I'd never heard of -- that Mr. Quiver story sounds like the goofiest thing ever, I need to track down a copy. Ditko excels at depicting action and movement, so it's no surprise so many of his characters fit into this vein.

Great to see Ron Frantz contributing to the letter column, and further discussion of Ayn Rand and Objectivism. It's a thorny subject, but important in the context of trying to understand Ditko's work.

Really, I can sum up best by saying "Another great issue of **Ditkomania**!"

HERO CENTRAL JUNIOR #2
Jason Bullock

Lighthearted and fast-moving superhero fun, very much in the vein of Teen Titans or New Mutants. I would've liked a little more explanation of the various characters' powers. People used to make fun of Chris Claremont for constantly droning on about Wolverine's adamantium skeleton or Psylocke's focused totality of whatever, but a little bit of context helps make the fights seem more meaningful and less random (I know I've been guilty of this in my own stories, which was driven home to me when some readers didn't realize that Lady Spectra's powers were in her gadgets, not some innate ability).

I did notice an awkward gap in the story: We see Seneca defeat the big guy with the staff, but not how Kineto managed to take out Cyclone Ranger. I was confused when Kidd Achilles woke up and everyone was back at HQ safe and sound.

Initially I was wondering why Jason would launch a spin-off to the already overstuffed **Hero Central** book. But I can see that this is serving as a refreshing counterpoint to the heavy angst and moral ambiguity of the main series. With a little more polish and attention to detail, I think this will be a fun series.

TALES OF FANTASY #61
Larry Johnson

Exploring the "dark underbelly" of the superhero genre is nothing new -- even the new "Man of Steel" movie has Superman at odds with the government and resorting to extreme measures. "The Hand", however, seems less like a critique of the hero genre and more like an extended metaphor for drug addiction. Freddy is as much a victim as the crooks he assaults, unable to resist the siren call of the power glove, despite the increasingly obvious danger it poses (there's a sexual/masturbation element to it as well, highlighted by Freddy's "Oh Oh Oh" at the end of chapter three). Meanwhile, Lew Brown is trying to unravel the origins of the glove, which are tied up with secret government experiments, the ubiquitous Mr. Morphoté, and yes, comic books! It's great seeing Larry -- the master of the short story -- digging into something this big and ambitious. I don't foresee a happy ending for poor Freddy, but I'm anxious to see how things develop.

Larry is really stepping up his artwork, as well. Every panel is jam-packed with detail, but always clear, well-composed, and easy to follow. The bold, textured inking is tailor-made for black-and-white. **Tales of Fantasy** remains one of the most consistently great books out there.

STRAW MAN #0
David Branstetter

David is clearly up to something here, even if I'm not sure quite what. Is this a goofy, surreal story, or a serious story about a guy with mental issues? Does his "origin story" represent the moment he gained superpowers (and a straw for a head), or is it the moment he suffered a psychotic break and began hallucinating his "adventures"? I dunno, but it's fascinating watching the book skip merrily up and down the scale of seriousness and realism. The situations are weird, but the emotions are very real -- depression, betrayal, longing, etc. In the last issue of **T-Frags**, Don Ensign wondered if the phrase "strawman argument" had any relevance here. It occurs to me that John Smith is having a strawman argument with the rest of the world by filtering everything he sees into a cartoonish superhero narrative. Or maybe David just thought a guy with a straw for a head was funny, who knows?

The artwork has some of that same ambiguity. There's a sort of low-key naturalism to it, but there's also a lot of cartoon exaggeration in the faces and figures. It's appealing, but a little off-kilter, which suits the stories.

Like I said, I'm not sure what's going on, but you certainly have my attention.

WESTERN TALES #1
Jim Main

Nice to see someone carrying the torch for this venerable American genre. I found "Sadie 6-Shot" frustrating, though. On the one hand, Rock Baker is an amazing artist who draws exquisitely beautiful women. On the other hand, the story is pretty much non-existent. The premise of the sheriff's wife secretly being an outlaw has great potential for either drama or comedy, but this doesn't have much of either. I kind of wish he'd just done 9 pages of sexy cowgirl pin-ups and not even bothered with the perfunctory "story".

Compare this to Lambert's "Under Western Skies" preview, which is just 3 pages of art with no dialogue, but still manages to evoke a sense of drama, intrigue, and personality. Terrific stuff, and I look forward to seeing the finished product.

"Reputation" is the highlight of the issue, a suspenseful story with appropriately dark, gritty artwork. I remember Tony Lorenz's early work in **Futuro Tierra**, and it's amazing how far he's come along. I love the way he moves his "camera" around, the extreme overhead views and low-angle shots really highlight the action. Great stuff. The only thing I could nitpick here is the lettering. The text doesn't always fit well inside the balloons, bumping against the edges or otherwise looking awkward. It's best to set up the text with short lines on the top and bottom, and longer lines in the middle. Like this:

THAT'S
CAUSE I MAKE
IT. SHERIFF'S COFFEE
TASTES LIKE HORSE
LINIMENT!

That way, it fits more naturally inside an oval balloon. I also think those long, thin "tails" you use on the balloons tend to get lost against the detailed backgrounds. Shorter and thicker ones would stand out more. I only harp on this because the rest of the visuals are so great, and more attractive lettering would be the finishing touch.

As ever, Jim puts together a good-looking, professional package. If he can keep the

story content strong, this will be a fine addition to the western tradition.

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a couple of non-ufo books:

MOTHMAN 'TOONS #1
Jay Gibeaut & Larry Blake

UFO alumnus Larry Blake sent along a copy of this. It's a series of one-panel cartoons, featuring the famous urban legend monster. Jay and Larry recast the creature as a sort of sad sack everyman, dealing with the trials and tribulations of everyday life. He goes on dates, holds down different jobs, goes to the doctor for checkups...it's not his fault he's a terrifying critter with gigantic wings and sharp claws! The jokes are pretty corny, but there's a ton of them, so chances are at least a few will hit the mark for you. Larry's art is beautifully slick as always, and here he adds gray tones that helps evoke the style of old humor mags like **Mad** and **Cracked**. I got a big kick out this. You can get a copy for $3.00 from Larry Blake / 69306 St. Rt. 124 / Reedsville, OH 45772.

WATUSI THE TALKING DOG #28
Dale Martin

The latest from my old Small Press Syndicate buddy, Dale Martin. Watusi is an easygoing pooch who mostly worries about where his next meal is coming from, but who nonetheless manages to stumble into strange and wacky adventures. In this issue, he has to help his future counterpart, W-Tusi[25], get back to his own time period. Luckily, Watusi knows any number of mad scientists and eccentric magicians who may be able to help. It's a fun little romp, and Dale's got a bouncy cartoon art style that zips the story right along. Cover price is $1.50, maybe toss in a little extra for postage. Dale Martin / P.O. Box 442612 / Lawrence, KS 66044 or visit www.smearysoapboxpress.com

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in other news:

I hope everyone enjoyed the new **Fantasy Theater**. I'm still debating whether I want to keep using print-on-demand in the future, or whether I'll go back to photocopying. There's no doubt that the p.o.d. books look better, but that comes at increased cost. On the other hand, my mail order sales were pretty much nil anyway, so jacking up the cover price can't exactly hurt.

If nothing else, I will be using p.o.d. for trade paperback collections in the future. This is turning out to be more complicated than I originally thought, mainly because so many of my old strips were collaborations. I really should get the various people's permission before reprinting their work, but some of them I haven't been in contact with for a decade or more! So I may end up having to omit or redraw certain stories. Stay tuned.

- JKC
jkcarrier@aol.com
webcomicsnation.com/jkcarrier

SAM SEZ #7

A column for the United Fanzine Organization newsletter, Tetragrammaton Fragments from Sam Gafford, 624 Metacom Ave., Apt. #103, Warren, RI, 02885. Email: lordshazam@yahoo.com July 2013

I really need to get more organized.

Not only does it seem that the deadlines creep up on me but, if I were organized, I wouldn't have had to ask Rob which number this column should be. To say that I'm running around in many different directions would be a severe understatement.

Last week, I finally sent the printer files for my new publication, SARGASSO. This is a scholarly journal devoted to the life and work of William Hope Hodgson and has taken up a great deal of my time. Sadly, I cannot afford to make this a UFO publication but I hope to be able to send out a pdf proof to anyone in the group who would like one. Just let me know either via email or in the FB group.

I also finally became directly employed by the company that I was doing temp work at and am hopeful that this will be a long time job. Seeing as I turned 50 last year, I really need it to be.

Recently, I had a conversation with Rob that really led me to thinking about some things. Now, I've been around for a while so I remember when zines were done on ditto machines and hand stapled. They were very much a DIY operation. Later came photocopied zines and now we are in the era where zines are professionally printed and even available electronically. All of which led me to think that there might not be a place for the 'old' type of zines. Now, I'm not talking about ditto zines again (I'll never want to go through that hell again no matter how nostalgic I am for the old days) but zines that are just photocopied on cheap paper and you can tell that someone put it together on their kitchen table and may not even have used a computer for the lay out.

Don't get me wrong. I love seeing the professional quality of zines like Jim Main's many titles and JKC's recent issue of FANTASY THEATER. But part of me misses those old zines. So when I was talking about this to Rob and questioning whether there's still a place for this type of zine, he proved me wrong by directing me to several zines that really fit that bill. I don't think I've ever been so happy to be proven wrong! There are zines like

that still out there but, I think, the main difference is that they don't seem to be comic related. They're focused on SF or old Boy's Adventure/Mystery series or many other things. Which makes me wonder… have we become so blasé and prejudiced against such zines if they're related to comics? Do we look at them and think that they are juvenile and unprofessional? I have to admit that, in the past, I have been overly critical of such efforts. In the end, what is more important? The material? Or how it's presented?

It may surprise no one when I say that I've pretty much 'retired' from doing artwork. I was never able to reach the level with it that I wanted and, to be frank, it took me forever to do them. I may do something here and there but, unless something changes, it's unlikely that I'll ever draw a comic strip again.

Instead, I am following the path that Rob has shown me with the SF zines and reviving my old horror zine, THE DAMNED THING. I have enough contributions for the first, small issue and will have it out by the middle of August. And it will be a UFO zine. Also, I am still looking for contributions for future issues. It is a zine that covers the horror field in all of its different permutations: literature, tv, movies, music, everything is fair game. It is a non-fiction zine which will feature articles and reviews. I hope that you like it.

REVIEWS

FANTASY THEATER #23 (J.K. Carrier)

JKC always provides a great reading experience and this was no exception. Out of the two stories, I enjoyed the Glorianna story the most. Both were well written and JKC's strength in layout and pacing is evident throughout. However, I felt that the artwork in the Lady Spectra story was weaker than Glorianna. The inking in Lady Spectra looked rough and lacked the sure, confident lines so evident in Glorianna. The actual physical production of the zine was fantastic! I hadn't seen anything from Ka-Blam done in this format and I am very impressed. It reminds me of the DC Digests from the 80's which I always loved. Another great zine from JKC!

TALES OF FANTASY #61 (Larry Johnson)

There are a few people in small press that I am constantly in awe of. Larry Blake is one. Jim Main and Rob Imes are two others. But Larry Johnson constantly amazes and surprises me. Every issue of TALES OF FANTASY is a delight and, quite honestly, I never know what I am going to find in those pages and that is a great feeling.

With this issue, Larry continues a story he began back in ToF #59 regarding a new superhero in town called "The Hand". As readers, we know that The Hand is really Lew Brown's brother, Freddie, who is also a recovering drug addict and it becomes apparent that the use of the technological 'glove' which Freddie has found has also become his new drug. I cannot wait to see what Larry does with the rest of this story. To me, this is in the best tradition of classic superhero comics like the famous GL/GA drug issues by Denny O'Neil and Neal Adams. This is the way superhero comics should be done today.

Once again, Larry produces a great zine which, he proudly says, is "DIY". It's photocopied and folded and stapled by Larry. There are few people, big or small press, who consistently impress me as much as Larry does. Not just with the quality of his material but his integrity and professionalism. I am proud to be in the same group as Larry Johnson.

DITKOMANIA #91 (Rob Imes)

I remember the great decades where there were many zines about superhero comics. Titles like AMAZING HEROES and BATMANIA were, to me, like gold. I devoured them eagerly but, through the years, most have dropped out of sight. DITKOMANIA has remained and I rejoice with every issue.

Ditko is one of those creators that we could probably talk about for many decades yet to come. His work is complex and deep with 5 decades worth of material to consider. Thankfully, this is in the hands of Rob Imes who not only has a good critical eye but is a talented editor as well. This particular issue focuses on a character that, when he first appeared, I pretty much dismissed. I mean, "Speedball"? This was from the same creator as "Mr. A", "Creeper" and so many others? At the time, I considered it as much a misstep as Kirby's DEVIL DINOSAUR.

I have since come to reconsider Kirby's DD and am able to enjoy it for its own sake. Reading these articles on Speedball makes me think that I may finally be able to do the same for this character. That's quite an accomplishment.

My apologies for not reviewing **STRAW MAN #0** and **HERO CENTRAL JR. #2**. That's all because of my poor organization. I will either review them in the next TF or in the UFO FB group. I recall that I mentioned that this year may be the 45th anniversary of this co-op. Are we going to do something special to mark this occasion?

Have a great summer everyone!

Sam Gafford

NOZ NOTES

by Rob Imes

As noted in this issue's "Chairman Chatter" (see page one), I am running for **re-election** as Chairman of the UFO. I would have liked to have seen more people join the UFO this year, under my Chairmanship, but at least I think more people are aware that the group still exists. Even if they don't wish to join our ranks at this time, perhaps they may do so in the future. In late May, I began adding PDFs to the UFO website of memberzines (with the permission of their publishers) that I hope in time will serve as a kind of library/ newsstand of our zines, both old and new. Current issues of *T-Frags* are available as a free PDF on the website, which answers the demand for that format. Unfortunately, I've not had time to add more zines during the past several weeks (just been too busy), but eventually -- as more and more zines are gradually added to the site -- I think that the site will serve as a valuable resource for fans of small-press publications.

Last issue, Don Ensign wondered about the continued use of **digest-size** publications given that print-on-demand companies offer similar costs for printing up digest and magazine-size issues. For me, the digest size is more economical because I print my zines at a local copier store, where there **is** a difference according to page size. But even if I was going the print-on-demand route instead, another cost factor to consider is the *postage* difference. This issue that you hold in your hands required a 66-cent stamp to mail (in the USA) because it can be mailed at "letter rate"and is under 2 ounces. If I added another sheet or two, it would require an 86-cent stamp to mail. (DM #91, a 40-page digest-size zine, required an 86-cent stamp.) If this issue was magazine-size instead, the postage costs would likely be much higher.

In his column this issue, Sam Gafford asks whether **photocopied zines** like this are a thing of the past, since so many zinesters are doing things using print-on-demand companies, which create a slick, professional appearance. While I'm glad that such services are available to those who want them, I am the type of person who warms up more to the more "homemade" approach of the photocopied zines. They are still being done today, and I urge anyone who wants to try some to check out the following zines: This issue's lettercol has a letter from **John Purcell** who publishes the ensmalled fanzine **Askew**. That zine was inspired by another one, **Andy Hooper's FLAG** which has had seven issues published since debuting in January. (You can request a copy of FLAG by writing to Andy Hooper, 11032 30th Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98125 or emailing him at *fanmailaph@aol.com*) **Robert Jennings' FADEAWAY** comes out every two months and he will mail out a sample copy for free to anyone who hasn't received the zine before. To request a copy, write him at 29 Whiting Road, Oxford, MA 01540-2035 or email *fabficbks@aol.com* Those are science fiction fanzines, but a current example of a comics zine would be **Robin Snyder's The Comics!** which has been published regularly since 1990. A sample issue is $2.50 postpaid in the USA, available from Robin Snyder, 3745 Canterbury Lane #81, Bellingham, WA 98225-1186. There are more zines out there, waiting to be read!

Last month I bought a new CD by former UFO member (and legendary small-press cartoonist) **Tim Corrigan** and his wife (I assume) Carol, titled "Welcome." It's a 10-song CD-R that is available for $12 postpaid from their website at *http://timandcarolcorrigan.bandcamp.com* where you can also listen to the tracks for free. Many of the songs reminded me a bit of Julian Lennon (mellower than John). Tim and his sons Matt and Nate also have songs on YouTube; search "The Corrigans" there to watch them perform. Impressive!

UFO REVIEWS:

HERO CENTRAL, JR. #2
(Published by Jason Bullock)

I quite liked the first issue of this series, but this 2nd issue is hard for me to get into. It's great to have it in color, but the same backstory-heavy atmosphere that lessens my enjoyment of *HCU* mars this series as well. This issue's plot revolves around the rescue of Sakura Yeoh by our teen trio; surprisingly this is done without much in the way of relief or comment in the immediate aftermath of the rescue. She is hurriedly whisked off at the halfway point, and later is mentioned as being at their HQ, but not shown again. So the pay-off or resolution that the reader has been waiting for is undermined by cutting away right as she is getting rescued. It would be like seeing Superman rescue Lois Lane but the scene changes right at the point where she is being rescued and we don't get to see the scene where she thanks him for saving him, faints in his arms, tells him what the bad guys are up to, etc. Dramatically speaking, that scene fails because it cut away too soon.

WESTERN TALES #1
(Published by Jim Main)

This issue contained two stories, the first one being a "good girl art" cowgirl type story drawn by Rock Baker and Jeff Austin. While the female figure-drawing seemed gratuitous, there is a market for such things, and I was reminded of AC Comics I've seen like *Femforce* that were of a similar nature. I thought the inking in particular was terrific; I loved how the lines were used for shading. The story was cute, too, if a bit illogical. The second story, on the other hand, written by Roger Keel and drawn by Tony Lorenz, was dull in comparison. The story is not told in a very dramatic or convincing way, and one wonders about whether it was even a story worth telling since nothing much of consequence happened. While there were a few well-done panels here and there, Lorenz's art has a kind of clunky look that doesn't have the realistic eye for frontier life that such a mundane tale would benefit from. Instead it looks more like an amateurish attempt at drawing *High Noon*.

Incidentally, I noticed on the back cover ad for the print-on-demand service that printed this comic that they have the same phone area code as I do! I went to their website (*www.comixwellspring.com*) and it turns out that they are based in Plymouth, MI which is only around a 30-minute drive from my home. So, I will have to keep them in mind if I ever decide to make my own comic. The postage costs of receiving books from a print-on-demand service (from the ones I've looked at) adds a lot to the total cost, but if I'd be able to simply pick up the printed books, that would allow me to keep expenses low. Hmmm....

FANTASY THEATER #23
(Published by J. Kevin Carrier)

Another excellent issue of this series. The printing by Ka-Blam was very good. I liked the spine's binding, reminiscent of the old Marvel annuals. I actually liked the second story in the issue (*Glorianna* by JKC) much more than the first story (*Lady Spectra and Lizard Man*, a collaboration between Steven Myers and JKC). Kevin's skill at both story and art shines through in the Glorianna tale. It flows naturally, in an unpredictable but sensible manner, and the artwork seems unforced, like it exists without having been drawn by human hands. (Unlike the first story, where a bit of clunkiness and Kirby influence is evident.) Although I'm not crazy about the idea of a comic being available primarily thru a website (as this one is), instead of by mail from the publisher, the high quality of this comic may justify the use of print-on-demand, to maintain that professional look.

STRAW MAN #0
(Published by David Branstetter)

David sent me both #0 and a back issue, #9. I found #9 to be a wonderfully funny and enjoyable comic, but thought #0 a bit disjointed, despite a few good moments. "The Last Laugh" involving a movie heckler called The Heckler (whose face resembles The Joker) was perhaps the best story in the issue. "An Inside Job," featuring the return of the villain of #9, was also good. The opening tale about Bad Penny (cool concept for a villainess) would have been great if we saw more of her and if the story had amounted to anything in the end. "Scene of the Crime" was also anti-climactic. The origin story had a couple cool *Cerebus*-like pages, but didn't make much sense to me -- how did he get a straw for a head? Despite these flaws, the comic was at least intriguing and had some enjoyable moments.

No room to review **TOF #61**! I'll write a LOC!

LETTERS

Thank you so very much for sending the current issue, Rob. I appreciate it, especially for the information about how Kickstarter works. This sounds like something I could use for eventually putting together a collection of my fanwriting, poetry, fiction, or whatever -- even a fanzine. It's a great concept, one that deserves more attention. Definitely thank you for this description and how-to guide.

Overall, this was an enjoyable look into what you UFOers are doing. Larry Johnson's review of ***Chunga* #20** caught my attention, mainly because this is the side of fandom that I occupy the most: science fiction fanzines. Quite often, these things don't even come close to talking about science fiction itself, more about fans and fandom. Nevertheless, Larry is right that fanzine fans are not condescending nor belittling people who are not into sf fanzines. Far from it. If anything, we like the idea of people getting more involved with publishing fanzines, so if that means doing a fanzine review and passing along contact information to get these self-produced literary gems, so be it. I welcome the mention. In fact, the latest issue of my ensmalled fanzine Askew is now completed, and just needs to be run off and then mailed. That will probably happen early next week. Naturally you are on the mailing list, and I will probably add in Larry's address and the other UFO members as well. The more the merrier, as they say.

Another thing. A few days ago when I was in the local Half-Price Bookstore the urge to flip through their comic book bins hit, so I went looking for past issues of ***Doctor Strange***. He was one of my favorite comic book characters when I was actively collecting comics from 1973 to 1983. The two that I found were #15 (March 1990) and #43 (July 1992). These were from when Roy Thomas was writing the comic, and the artists were competent: #15 was drawn by Jackson Guice and #43 by Geof Isherwood. Good work, but nothing like the Jim Steranko issues stashed away in my lock-box. Enjoyable issues, definitely, and it makes me wonder if any of the UFO members are fond of Doctor Strange. I think I'd like to see an article about this character at some point. Don't expect me to write that very soon: I am quite busy finishing my dissertation and getting ready for the World Science Fiction Convention (LoneStarCon 3) coming up in six weeks. San Antonio is a mere three hour drive from home, so my wife and I are going. We are extremely fired up about it, too.

With that, that's about it for this time around. Many thanks again for sending this to me, and I look forward to the next issue. Probably over this weekend I will be loccing *Ditkomania* #92, which I've been flipping through these past couple of days. More fun material.

All the best,

John Purcell
3744 Marielene Circle
College Station, TX 77845-3926
j_purcell54@yahoo.com

(Thanks, John, for the letter! Readers, John Purcell publishes the science fiction fanzines ASKANCE and ASKEW, both of which can be obtained by contacting John at his address above. PDFs of ASKANCE can also be found at http://efanzines.com/Prior/index.htm *-- Rob Imes)*

Re: Tetragrammaton Fragment

I have a weird photographic memory. It chooses to make its snapshots when I least expect it. Mostly the information stored appears absolutely useless, or mostly useless. For example; in 1974 the Italian popstar Adriano Celentano had a hit in parts of Europe with "Prisencolinensinainciusol". It sounded like English, but I never could quite make out the lyrics. 30 years later I google the title, 25 letters, spelled it accurately and got an immediate hit. The lyrics were just like the title, meaningless. Adriano made it all up of gibberish, to make it sound like he was singing in English.

Occasionally my mind does come up with something useful. Such as when I was asked the meaning of "555". It first came to mind that all telephone numbers in American films start with 555. So far I'm on par with wikipedia, right!? Here comes the part wiki doesn't know. Yet.

I also remembered Christian Worch (sf-fan and politically active neo-nazi. we never talked politics, mind you) telling me that Rudolf Hess always used "VVV" to signify laughter in letters from his prison in Spandau. That would be the Roman numeral 5.

Of course, most of the mysticism around numbers come from the Kabbala. The Jews didn't have numbers, so they used their letters as numbers instead. That's why there is an entire "science" devoted to seek for secret "hidden" messages in the Bible, looking at the numerical values of words. So it occurred to me to look up the 5th letter in the Hebrew alphabet. It was "H". Pronounced "Ha" (as in "hard"). So... 555 was Ha-Ha-ha. This number is a joke.

But my brain didn't stop working there. After a few more rotations in the old wooden bolts and cogs, more pieces of information surfaced. It occurred to me that the letter "H" appeared twice in the tetragrammaton, in the name of God. When Moses asked the burning bush, who he should say had sent him, the answer was: IHWH, in archaic Hebrew an entire sentence meaning "I am who I will (prove to) be."

Looking at this sentence, and understanding a bit how languages work, I figured out that "H" is used in two different meanings. H1= is/am, H2=to be
HHH could therefor be the oldest existing game with words. "To be is to be."

A game, playing with words... Ha-ha-ha! It doesn't sound like that at all when we laugh, does it? But I guess that is the origin of "ha-ha-ha" as something to signify laughter. In most languages.

It really was just a joke to begin with. "555"

Fhannishly,

Wolf von Witting
wolfram1764@yahoo.se

(Thanks, Wolf! Readers, Wolf publishes the science fiction fanzine ***CounterClock****, whose most recent issue was released in February. You can read PDFs of the zine at* http://efanzines.com/CounterClock/index.htm *)*

This LETTERS section is for any non-member of the UFO to comment on what they've read in these pages. If you'd like to contribute a letter for publication, simply contact UFO Chairman Rob Imes.

The UFO CHECKLIST

The United Fanzine Organization (UFO) is a co-op of small-press comics publishers and creators dedicated to setting a higher standard of quality in independent and alternative press. The members mutually aid each other in the promotion and production of their own publications. Any small-press publisher interested in applying for membership in the UFO should contact the UFO Chairman: **Rob Imes, 13510 Cambridge #307, Southgate, MI 48195** or you can email him at ***robimes@yahoo.com*** The official UFO website: *http://unitedfanzineorganization.weebly.com*

TETRAGRAMMATON FRAGMENTS!! #229: This is the UFO Newsletter, the central forum for UFO members, containing columns and artwork that can't be found anywhere else. 32 digest-size B&W pages for **$2.50** postpaid in the USA from **Rob Imes, 13510 Cambridge #307, Southgate, MI 48195** or you can email him at ***robimes@yahoo.com*** for more info.

DITKOMANIA #91: This issue of the fanzine devoted to comics creator Steve Ditko features a long article by Rob Imes about the 1980s character **SPEEDBALL**. Plus a long lettercol reacting to the previous issue, with replies to the letters from former ACE Comics publisher **Ron Frantz**! 40-page B&W digest with a color cover for **$3.00** postpaid in the USA from **Rob Imes** (see address above).

FANTASY THEATER #23: A Lady Spectra and Lizard Man team-up by **Steven Myers** and **J. Kevin Carrier**, plus another adventure of the female barbarian Glorianna by **J. K. Carrier**. A 56-page B&W digest-size comic (with color covers) available in print for **$3.50** from ***www.indyplanet.com*** and also available digitally for **99¢** from ***www.indyplanet.com/digital***

HERO CENTRAL JUNIOR #2: Continuation of the saga starring the young heroes Seneca, Kineto, and Kidd Achilles. 16-page full color digest comic for **$2.50** from **Jason Bullock, P. O. Box 2684, Loganville, GA 30052**. Email ***jasonb@girafnetwork.com*** for more info or visit HCU on the web at **http://www.girafnetwork.org**

STRAW MAN #0: A collection of miscellaneous Straw Man adventures with two never-before-seen stories. A fun done-in-one comic that is a great introduction to the hero who truly lives by the phrase "Sometimes Life Just Sucks." 32-page B&W full-size comic for **$4.00** postpaid from **David Branstetter, 4212 Frisse Ave., Evansville, IN 47714**. Email ***strawmancomics@gmail.com*** or visit ***www.strawmancomics.com***

TALES OF FANTASY #61: More about the new costumed hero **"The Hand"** with chapters 3 and 4, plus an installment of *Dream Diary* and a lengthy, interesting letters column. 52-page B&W digest-size comic book with color covers for **$3.00** postpaid in the USA from **Larry Johnson, 31 Greenbrook Rd., Hyde Park, MA 02136**. Email ***LewBrown75@yahoo.com*** or visit **www.LarryJohnsonartist.com**

VALIANT EFFORTS Vol. 3 #4: StreetFury continues, plus two backup tales starring The Golden Protector! Full-size 28-page B&W comic with a color cover for **$3.00** postpaid from **Don Ensign, 250-A S. Paseo Cerro, Green Valley, AZ 85614**. Email him at ***donensign@mail.com*** for info.

WESTERN TALES #1: Full-size B&W anthology comic about the Old West! Two tales in this issue. Available for **$4.60** postpaid from **Jim Main, 13 Valley View Road, Brookfield, CT 06804**. Visit **www.mainenterprises.ecrater.com** or email ***jmain44@aol.com***

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